

Ozark

National Scenic Riverways



Superintendent Bill Black

Ozark National Scenic Riverways preserves the free-flowing Current and Jacks Fork Rivers, the surrounding natural resources, and the unique cultural heritage of the Ozark people. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/ozar or Facebook.

Comments? Write to:

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Monday, July 7, 2014

Riverways Reflections

There has been a lot happening at Ozark National Scenic Riverways in the last month. Visitation has been steady at our campgrounds, landings, and concession operations. Campers have been enjoying a variety of new weekend campfire programs this summer. Everyone is invited to attend these programs at our campground amphitheaters on Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m., even if you're not camping in the campground. The cave tours at Round Spring have also been well attended. If you haven't visited Round Spring Cave recently you should stop by for a tour at 10 a.m. or 2 p.m., though you may want to come early to get tickets before the tours fill up. Contact Round Spring Ranger Station at 573-323-8093 for more information.

The Ozark Heritage Day celebration was held on June 28 at Big Spring. The event was a huge success thanks to the hard work of the folks from the Ozark Heritage Project. When the sequestration budget cuts last year forced us to cancel several of our special events, Ozark Heritage Project jumped in with the offer to help fund and coordinate the programs. As a result of their dedication to preserving the Ozark heritage, approximately 750 visitors enjoyed a beautiful summer day of cultural demonstrations, contests, and vendors at the Depression Era farm site near Big Spring. The hard work demonstrated by Rick Mansfield and the Ozark Heritage Project volunteers exemplifies the spirit of perseverance that is such a rich part of the unique cultural heritage that we strive to preserve at Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

Over the past weekend, Alley Mill was open for the first time this summer and was the site of our Alley Spring Independence Day Celebration. Visitors were treated to free watermelon and lemonade while enjoying square dancing and music provided by the Western Grand Squares and the Shortleaf Band.

The project to rehabilitate Alley Mill has continued to progress very well. If you haven't been out to Alley Spring this summer, now is the time to stop by and see the old red mill with a fresh coat of bright red paint and a new roof. It's a breathtaking sight, in contrast with the beautiful blues and greens of Alley Spring. The mill will be open 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. on weekends for the remainder of July, with restoration work continuing through the week. Alley Mill will also be open daily from August 1-17 and after that will be closed again for construction of an accessible walkway up to the mill. We are anticipating all work to be finished before the "Haunting in the Hills" event in October.

We are continuing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Ozark National Scenic Riverways. A concert series will feature talented local musical groups in July and August. You can enjoy Current River Bluegrass at Alley Spring on July 19 and at Pulltite on August 30, with both concerts beginning at 7 p.m. Buzzard Run will perform at Big Spring on July 26 at 7 p.m. A formal anniversary program will be held at Big Spring on August 23 at 6 p.m., featuring guest speakers and musical entertainment.

I would like to recognize and appreciate some recent efforts by our dedicated and skilled park rangers. On the afternoon of June 29 torrential rain caused flash flooding along numerous creeks between Van Buren and Winona. When it became clear that the community of Fremont was threatened by the rapidly rising water, the Carter County Sheriff's Department reached out to the park's Swift Water Rescue Team for assistance evacuating residents. Eight park rangers deployed four patrol boats to assist other emergency responders from the county and state with the rescue effort, which resulted in all residents being shuttled to safety.

Rangers also launched boats on the Current River to warn campers and floaters of the need to

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Riverways Reflections (*continued*)

move to higher ground as flooded creeks poured into the river, causing a rise of over 8 feet in just a few hours. Several search and rescue operations were conducted by park rangers that evening and the next day due to park visitors being stranded. Thankfully, there were no serious injuries suffered as a result of the localized flooding. We did implement some temporary closures in the Big Spring area, but park facilities sustained no serious damage and all areas were opened the next day. I would like to thank MoDOT and Carter County for quickly completing repairs to open M Highway before the Independence Day weekend.

For more information about upcoming activities, call park headquarters at (573)323-4236 or visit the park's Facebook page or website at www.nps.gov/ozar for regular updates. Be safe and enjoy your park!

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